



EUROPEAN UNION
OF THE DEAF



Mapping of Relay Services in Europe: preliminary findings

9 June 2026

Context

EECC implementation review in 2025 by EUD and EFHOH:

- Not all Member States provide different types of relay services
 - Availability of relay services is uneven
 - User experience, quality, and resources are varying greatly
 - Issues with interoperability and cross-border access
-
- EC Proposal for a Digital Networks Act provides the opportunity for better relay services provisions, hence the need for evidence in our joint survey.

Survey

From 8 April 2026 to 22 May 2026

Respondents:

- National Associations of the Deaf
- Organisations of Hard of Hearing people
- Relay Service Providers
- Telecommunications National Regulatory Authorities

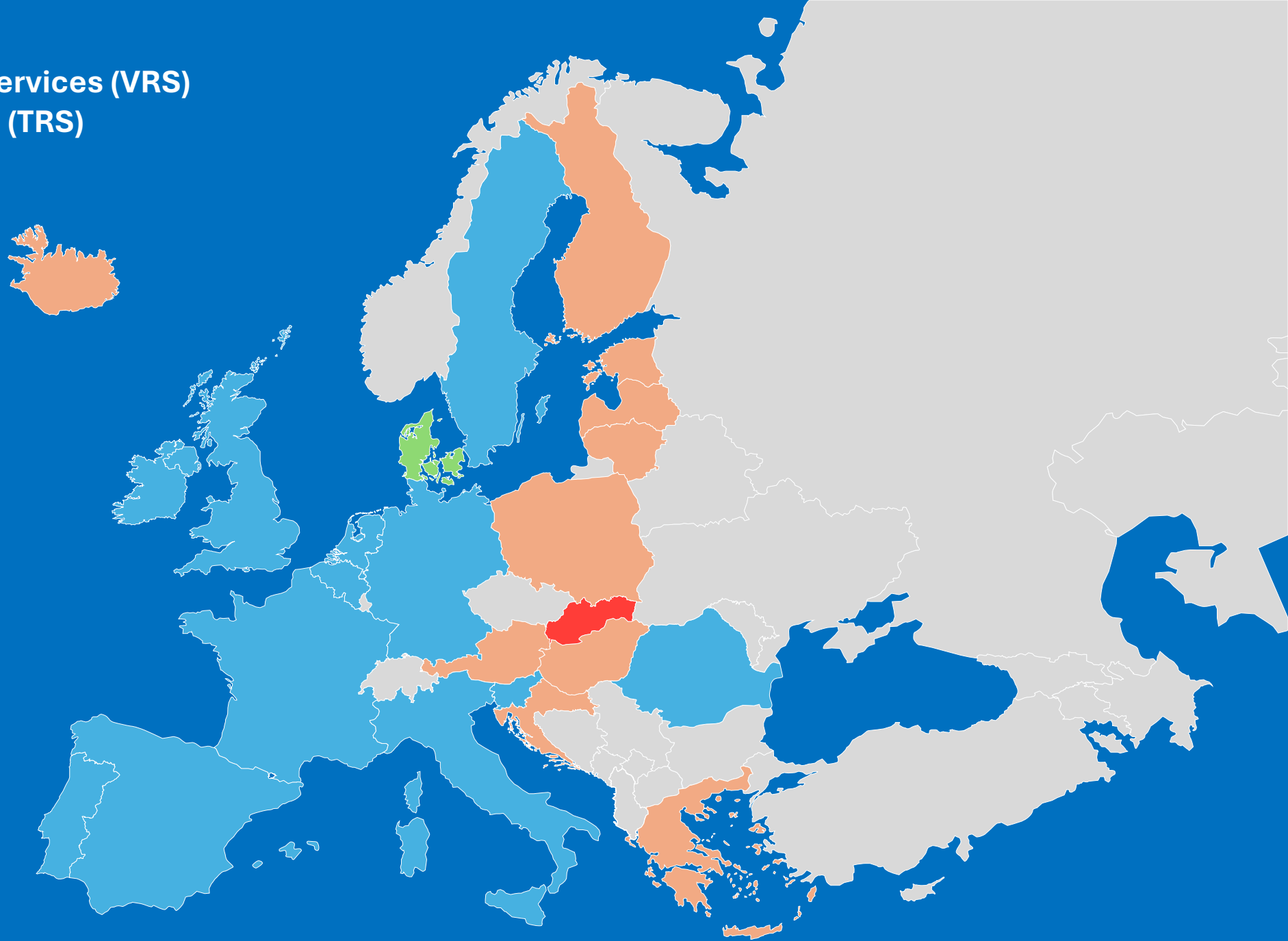
+/- 35 questions per relay service type covering service setup, availability and access, languages and modes, technical quality, user experience and governance and resources.

Limitations from the survey

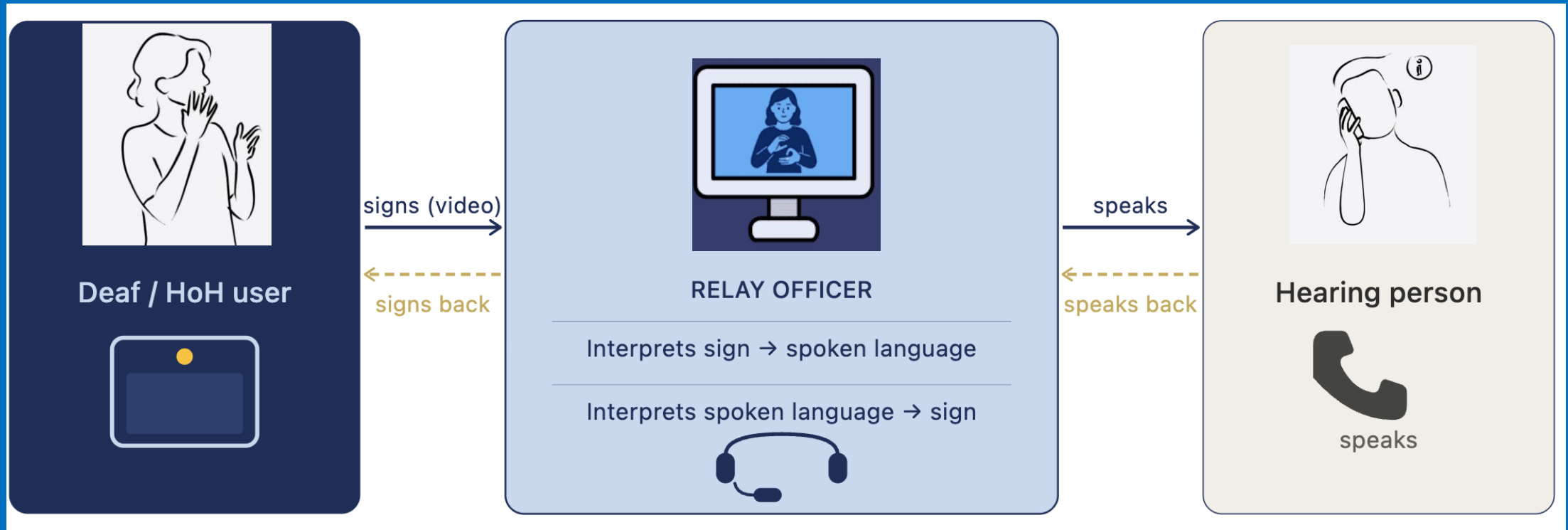
- **Limited coverage on access to 112:** Relay to 112 only surveyed
- **Uneven awareness among respondents:** Varying familiarity levels on Total Conversation, live video, text, and real-time text.
- **Varying answers within some countries** require alignment with contributors.
- **Speech-to-Speech Relay Services data** require further analysis

These are preliminary findings. A detailed report will follow later in 2026 and may refine some of the conclusions presented today.

Provision of Video Relay Services (VRS) and/or Text Relay Services (TRS)



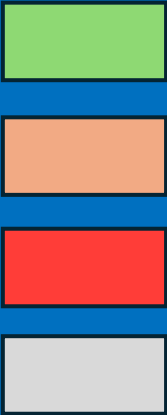
Video Relay Services



“Video Relay Service (VRS): service that enables sign language users and other users to interact by providing conversion between sign language and speech in substantially real time”.

ETSI ES 202 975 - Human Factors (HF); Requirements for relay services

Availability of Video Relay Services

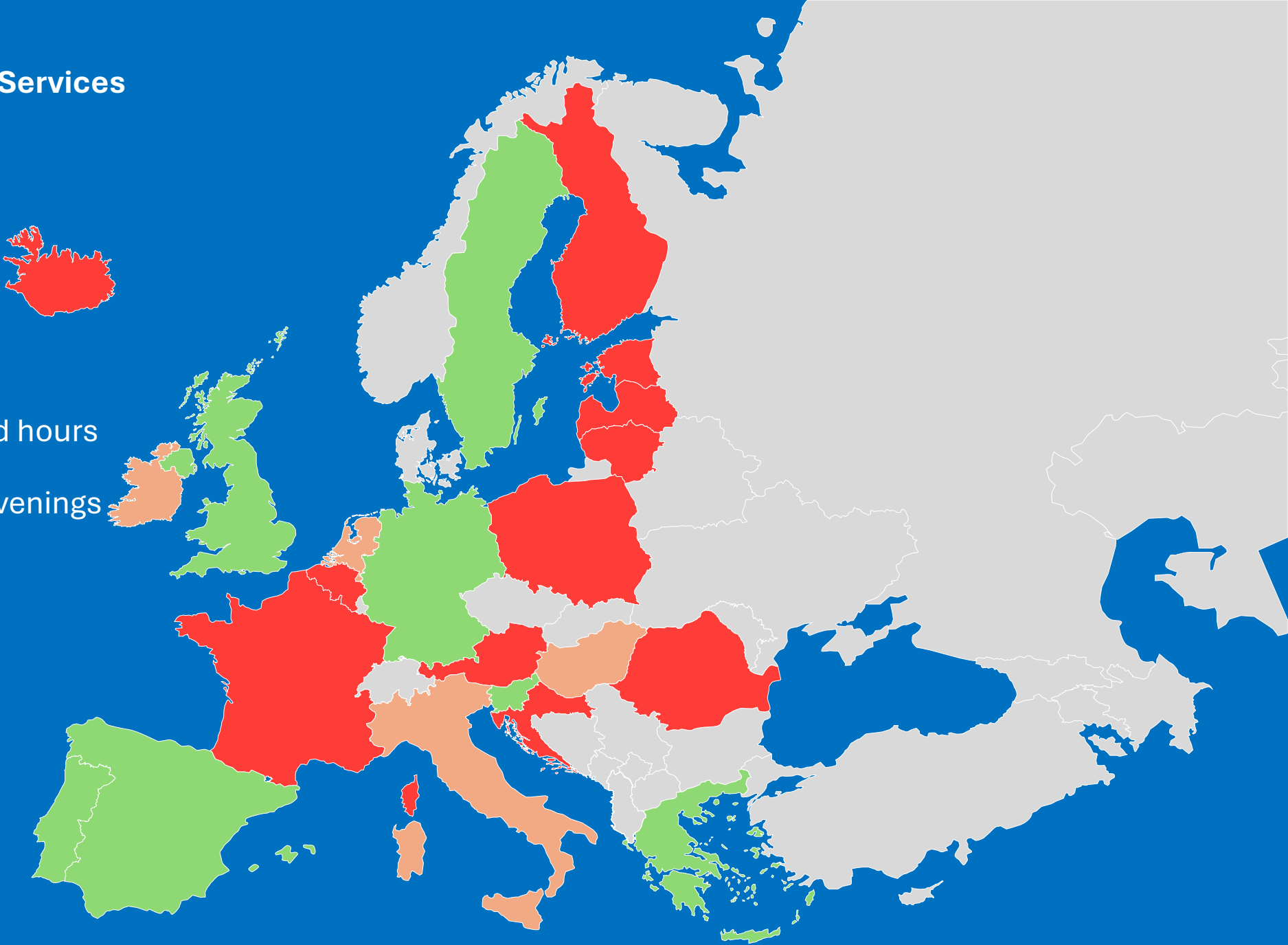


24/7

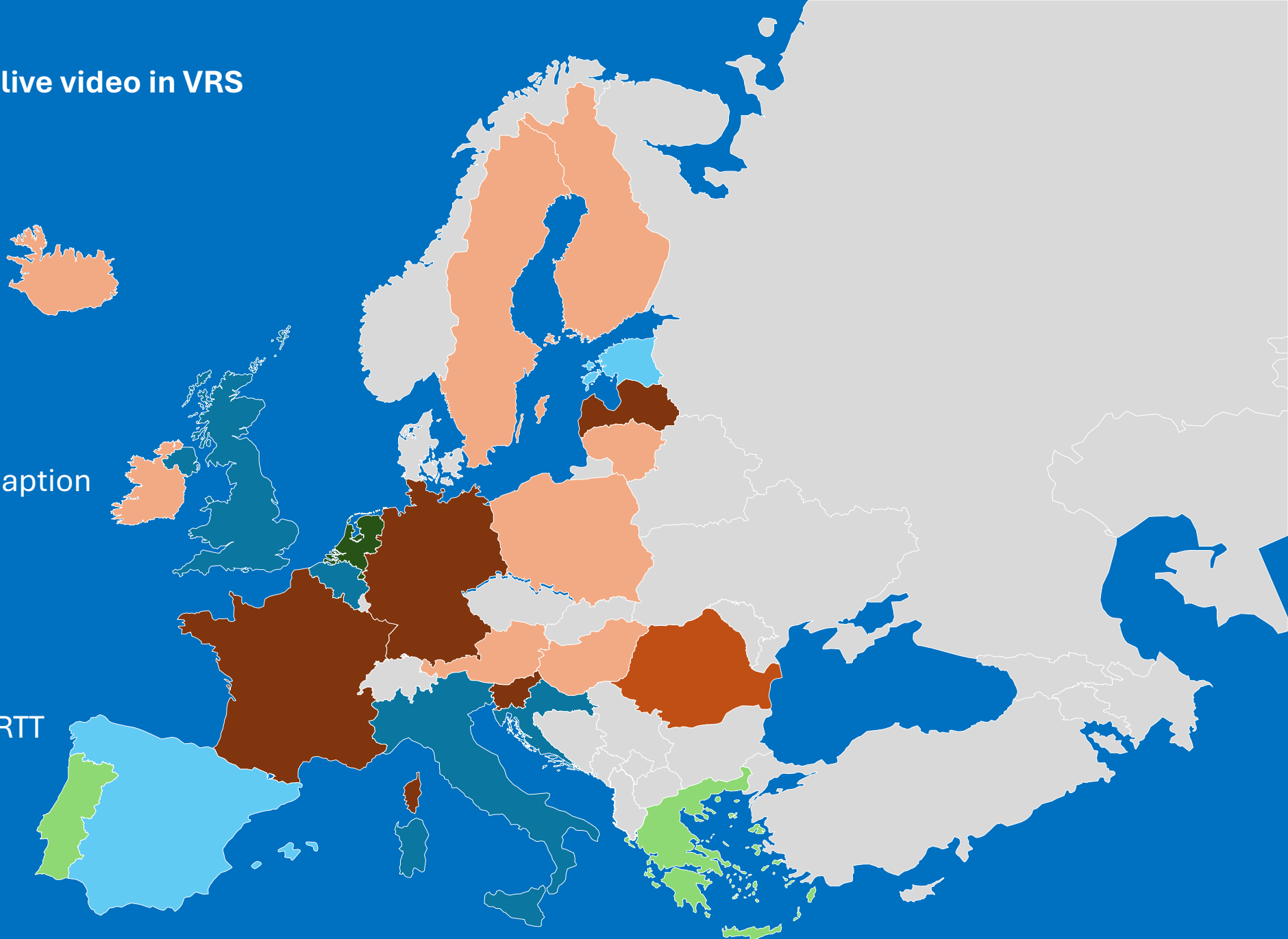
Everyday - Limited hours

Weekdays excl. evenings

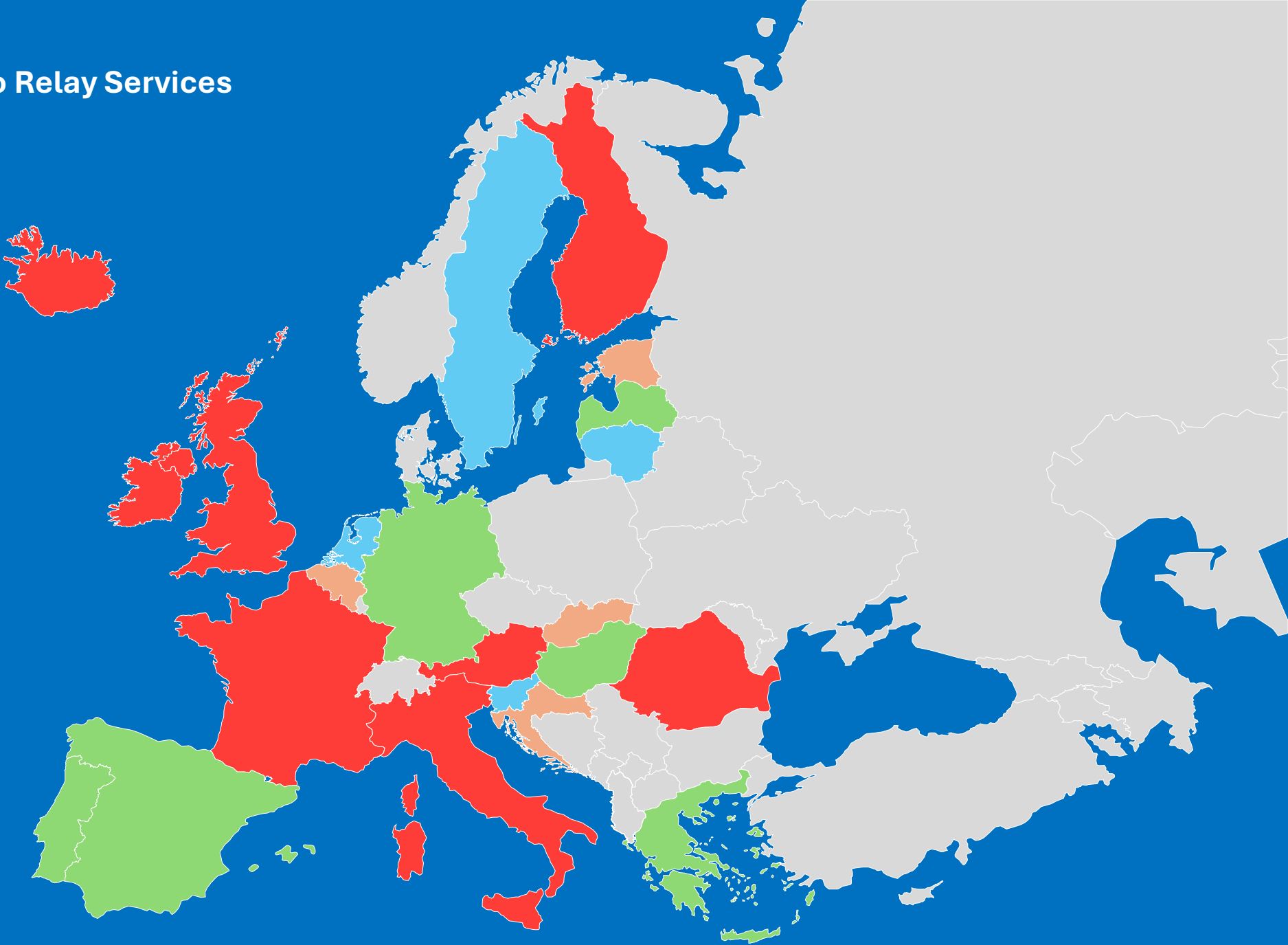
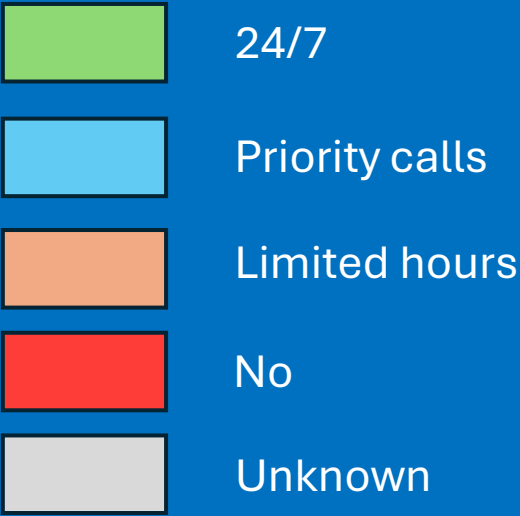
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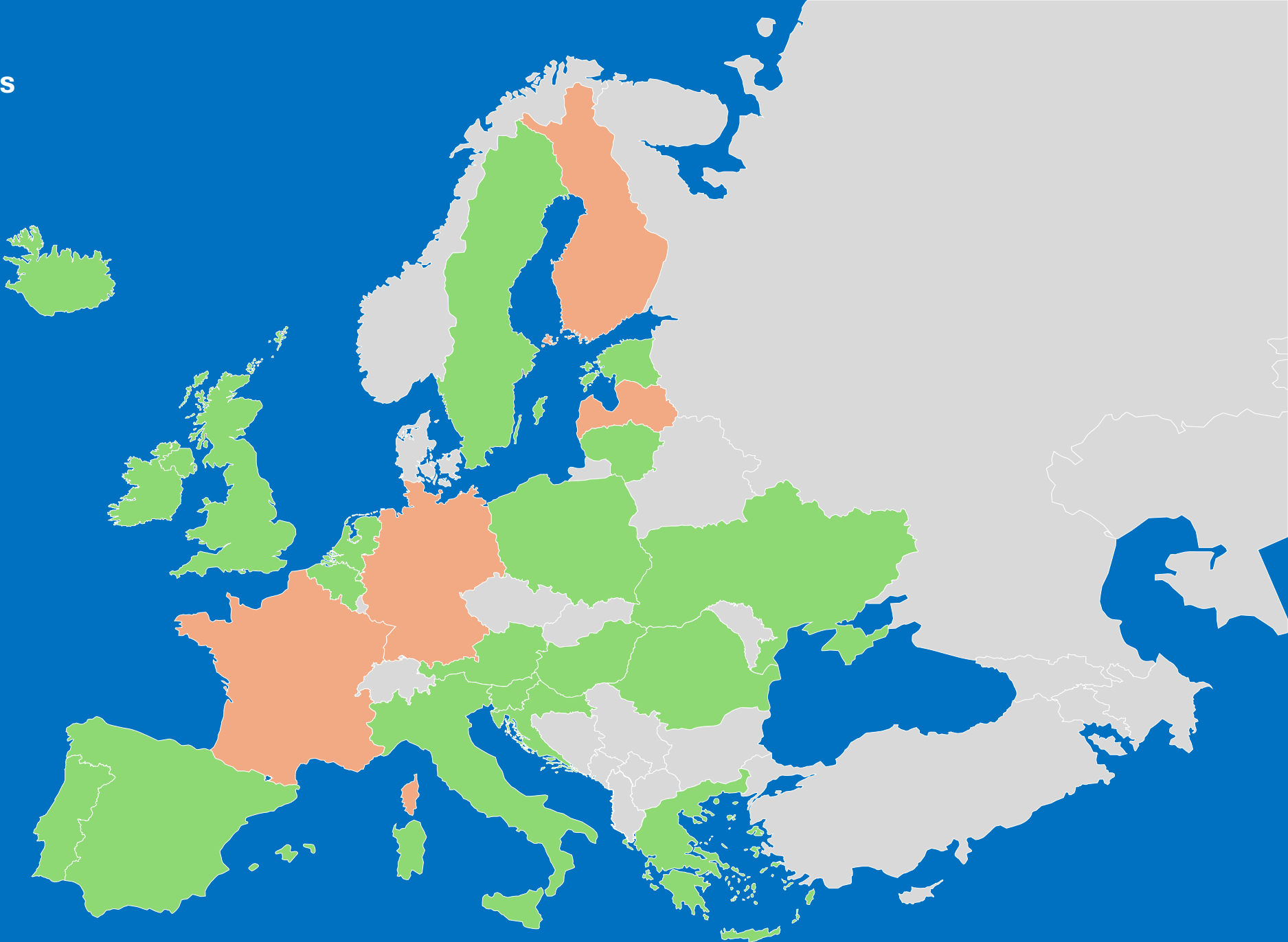
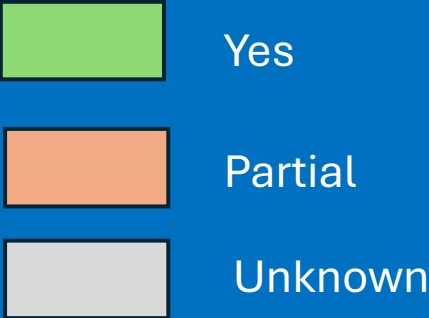
Total Conversation and/or live video in VRS



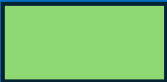
112 services through Video Relay Services



VRS free of charge for users



VRS time limitation per user



No



20-30 min.



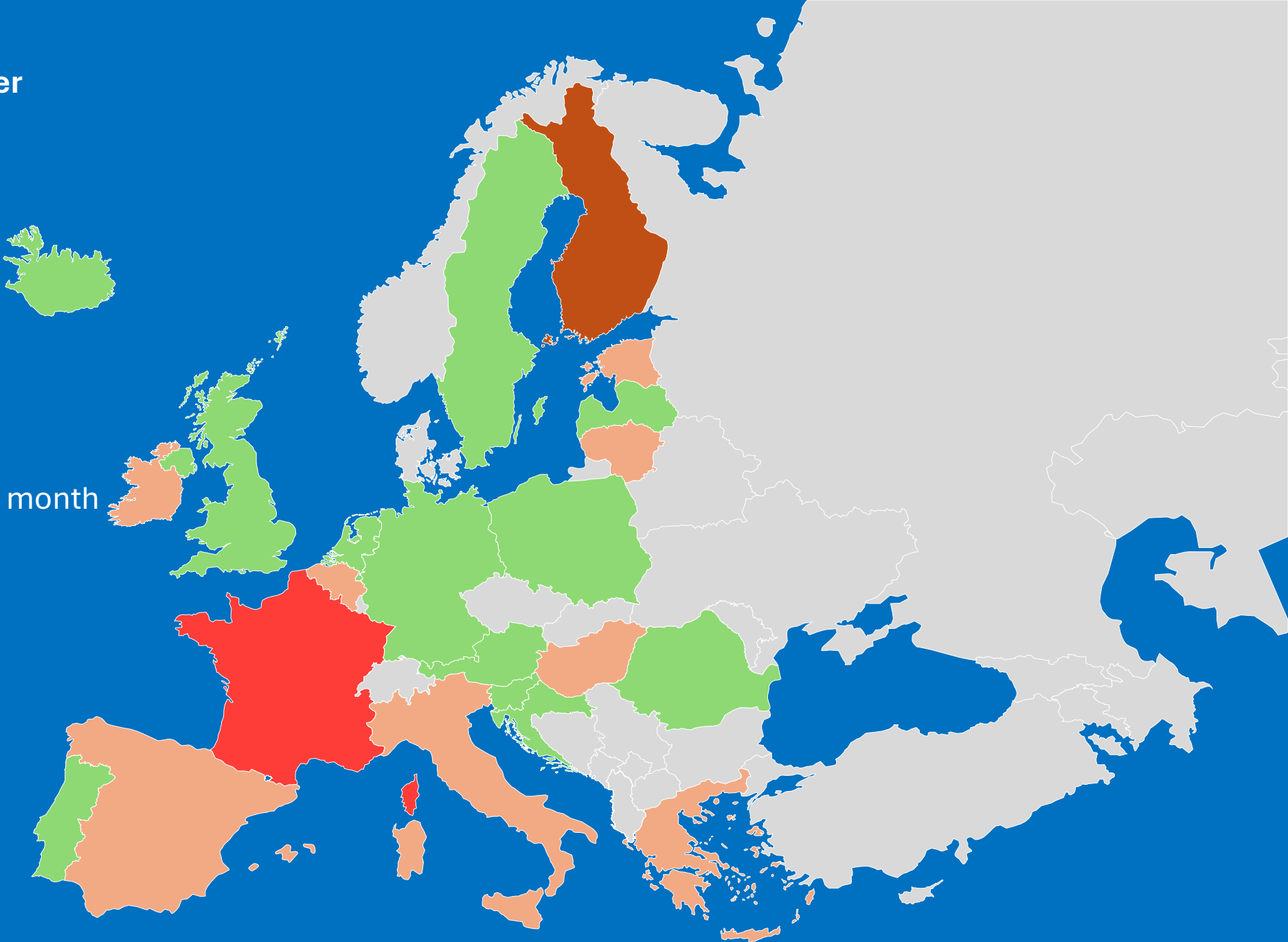
15 min.



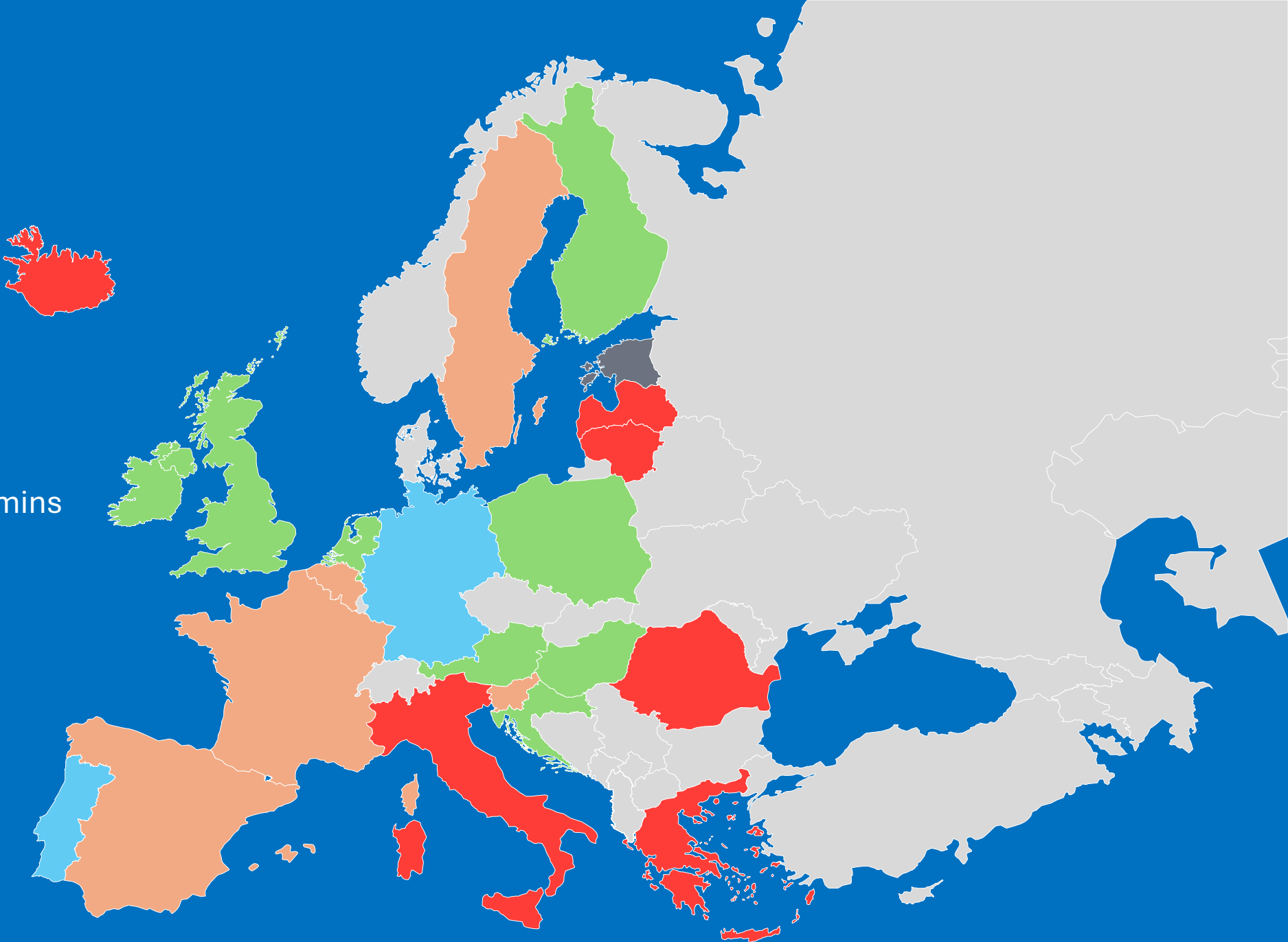
Limited hours per month



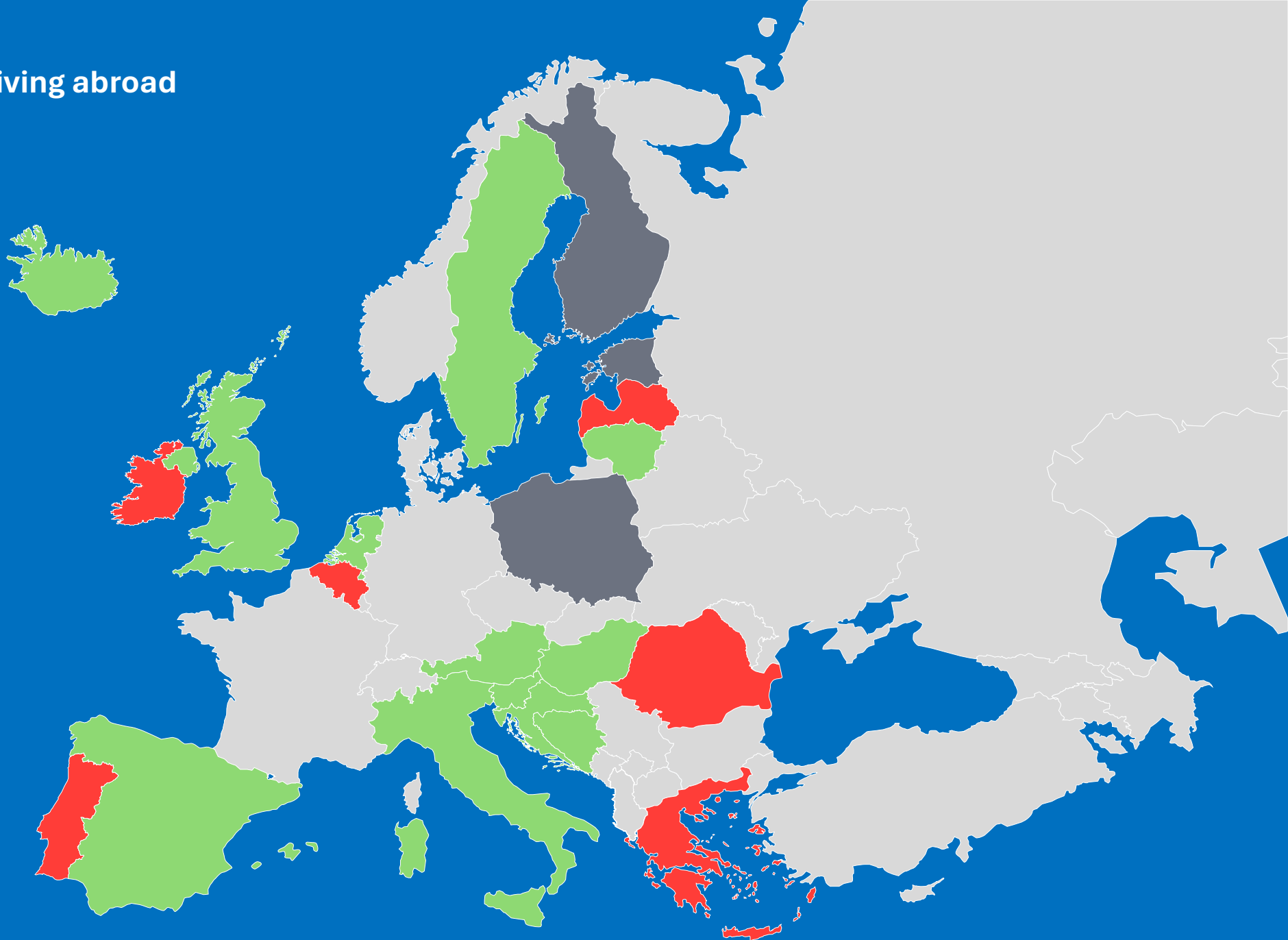
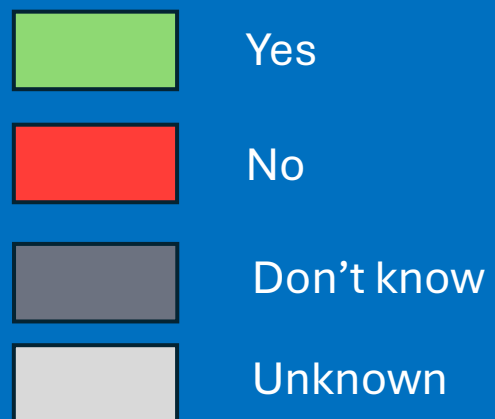
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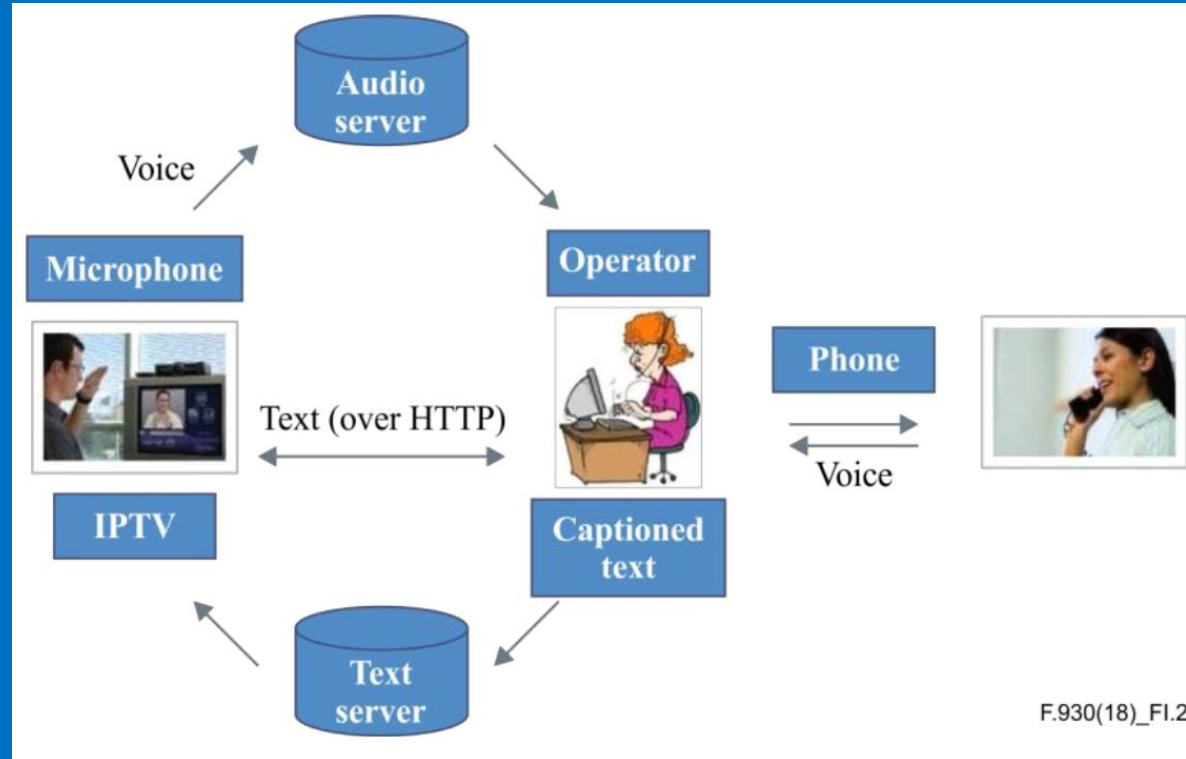
VRS waiting queues



VRS availability for users living abroad



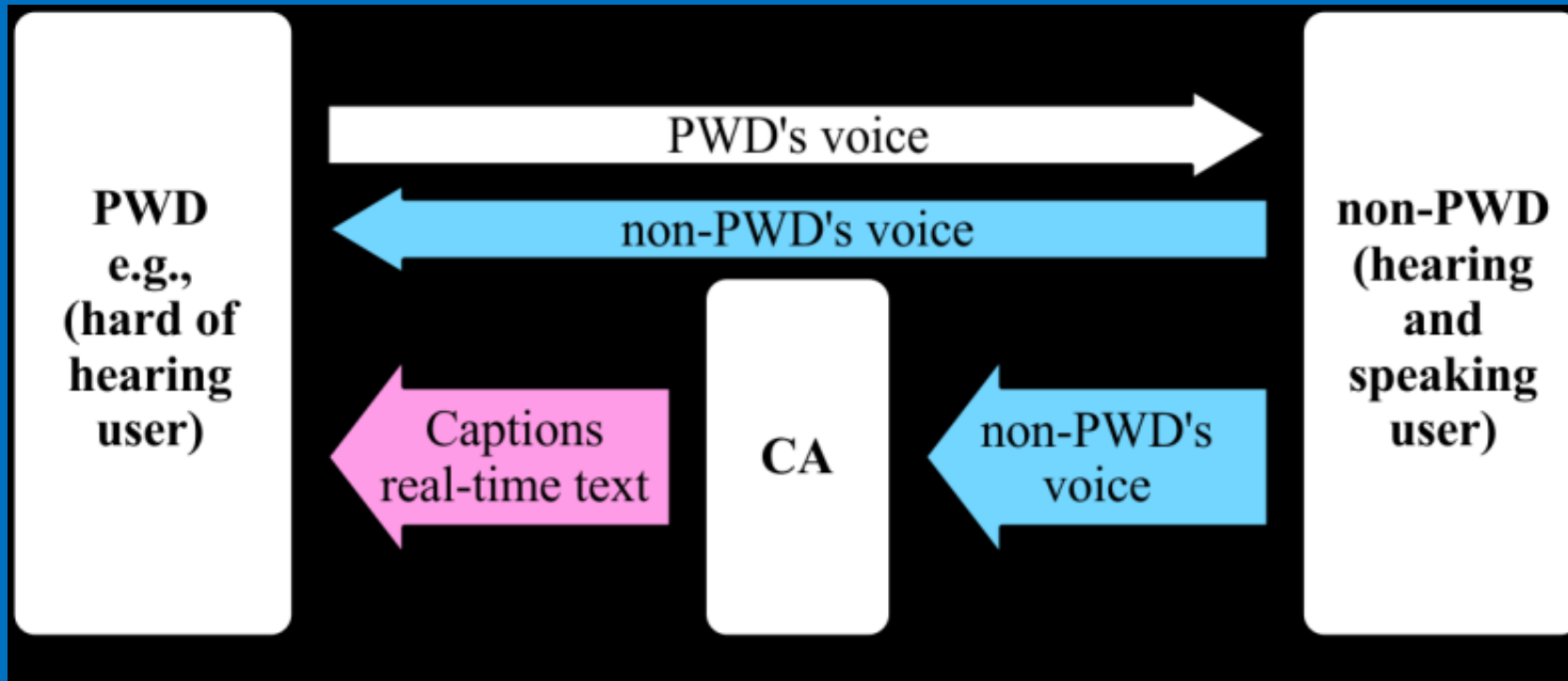
Text Relay Services



“Text Relay Service (TRS): A telecommunications relay service that allows communication by individuals with speech and hearing disabilities. Text is converted by a Communication Assistant into verbal information over a voice telecommunication service”.

ITU F.930: Multimedia telecommunication relay services

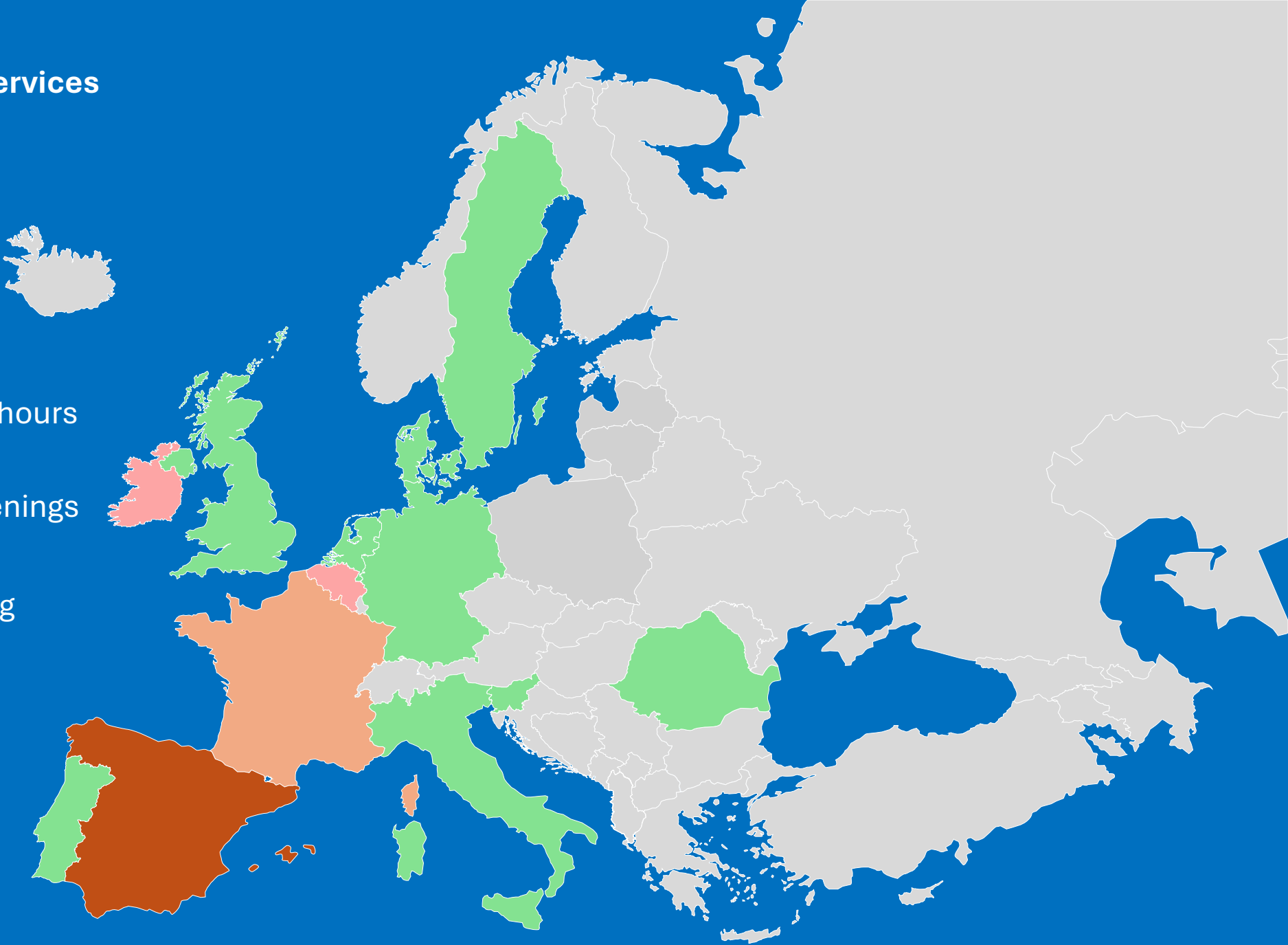
Text Relay Services



“Text Relay Service (TRS): A telecommunications relay service that allows communication by individuals with speech and hearing disabilities. Text is converted by a Communication Assistant into verbal information over a voice telecommunication service”.

Availability of Text Relay Services

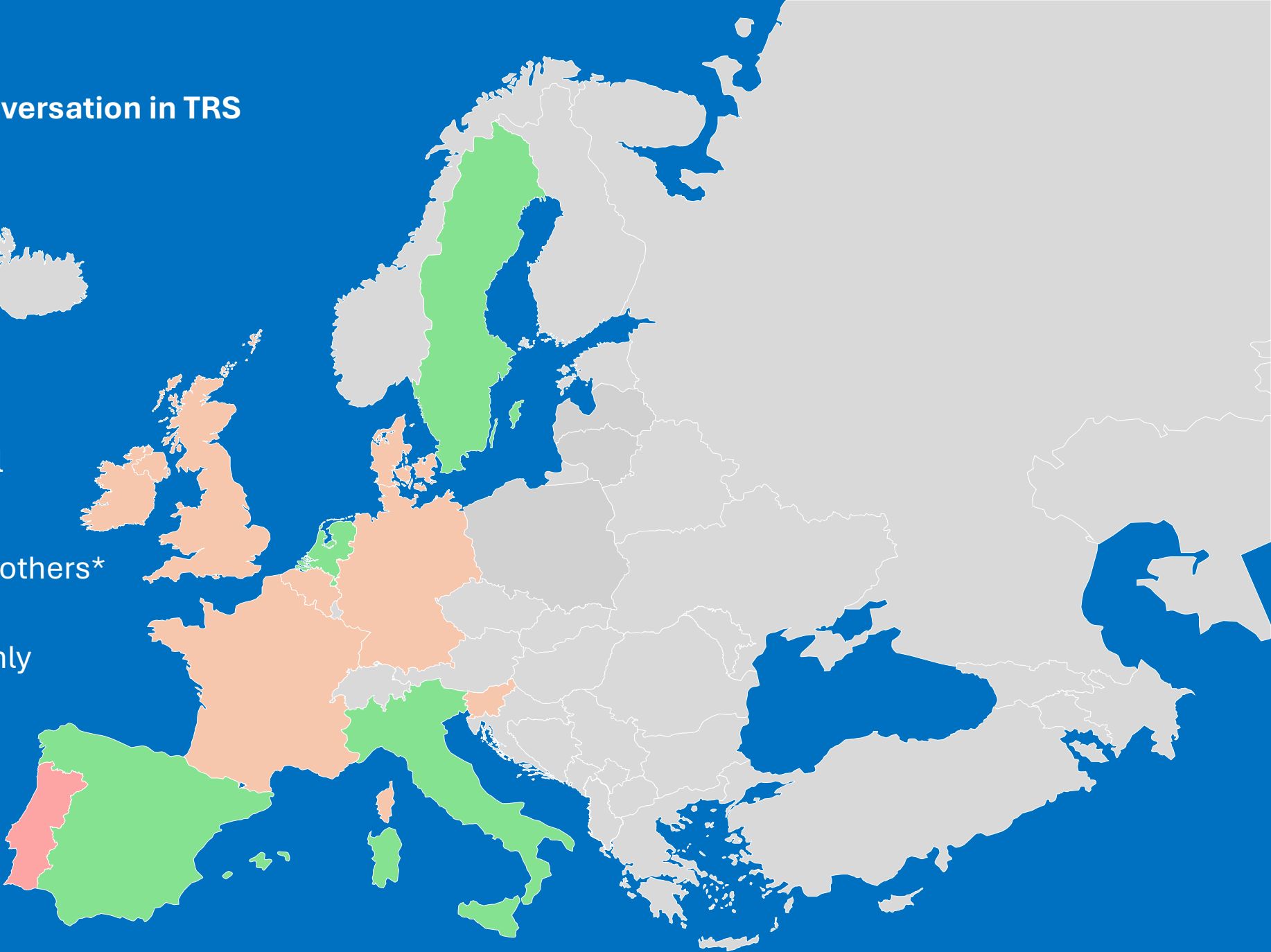
- 24/7
- Everyday – Limited hours
- Weekdays excl. evenings
- Mixed / pre-booking
- Unknown



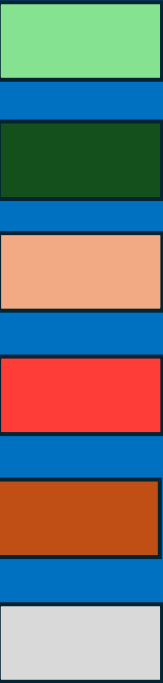
Real Time Text and Total Conversation in TRS

- Real Time Text & Total Conversation
- Real Time Text only + others*
- Total Conversation only + others*
- Unknown

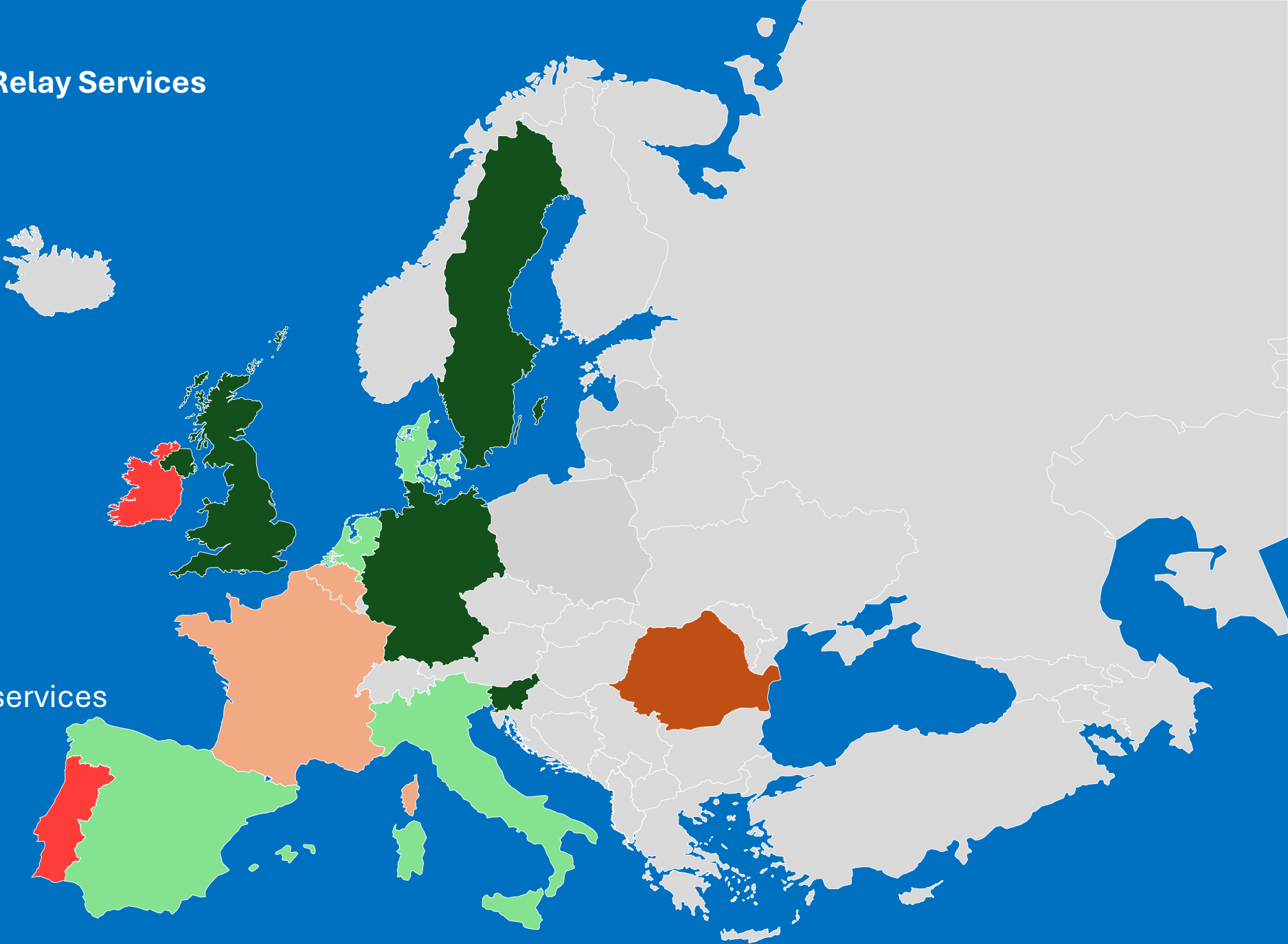
*Others: App / Web / SMS, captioned telephony



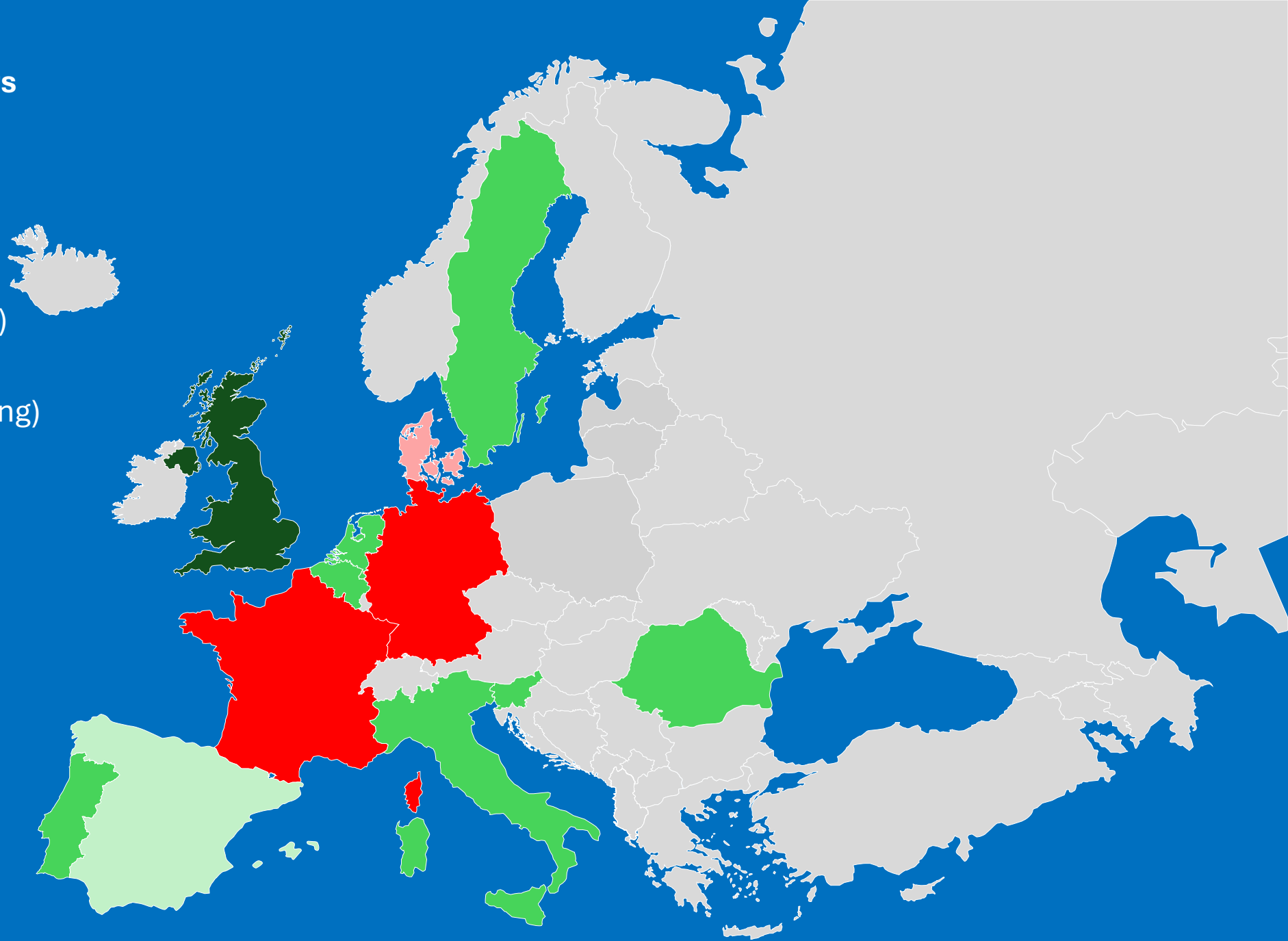
112 services through Text Relay Services



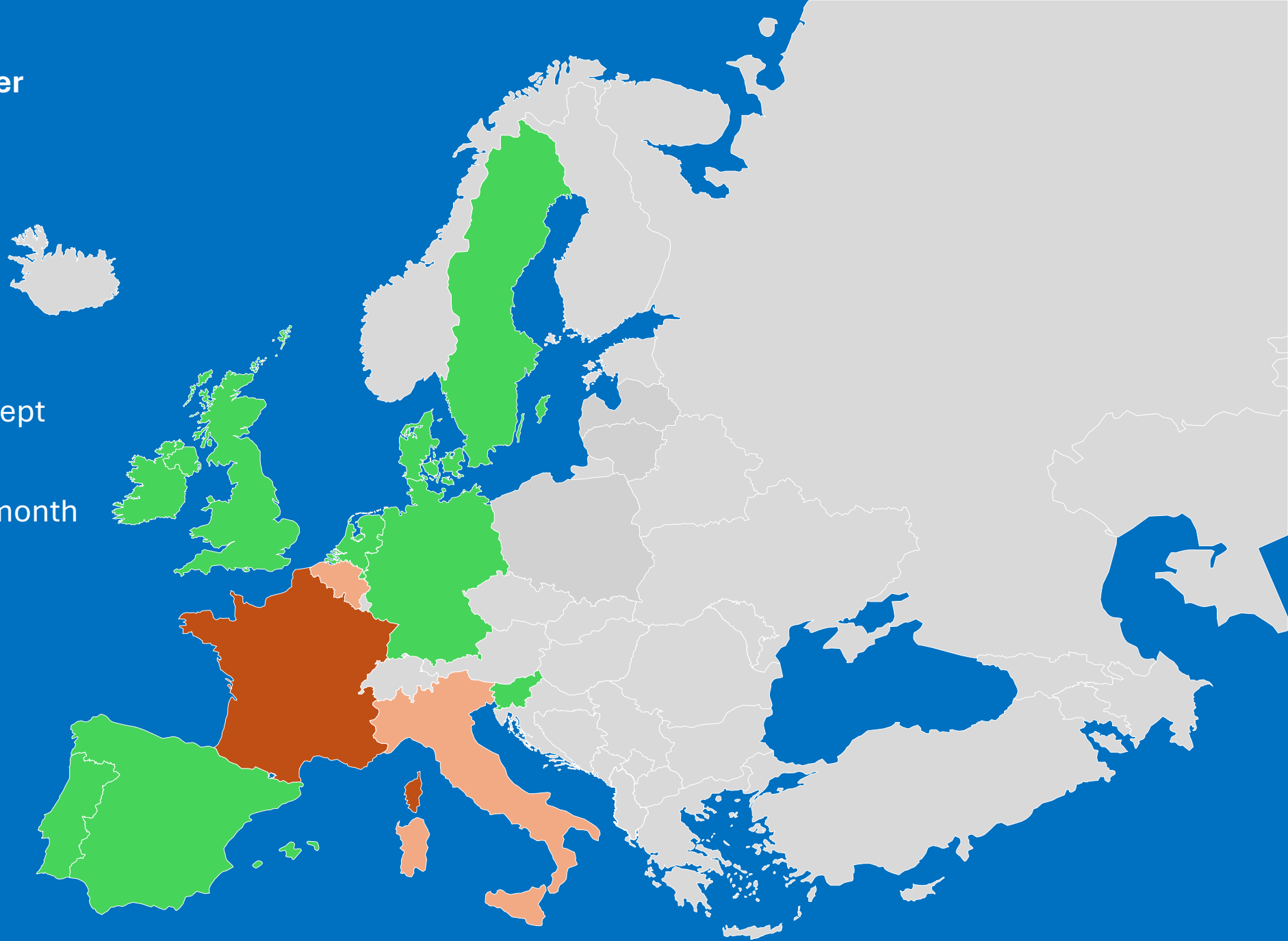
- 24/7
- Priority calls
- Limited hours
- Not available
- No, but other 112 services
- Unknown



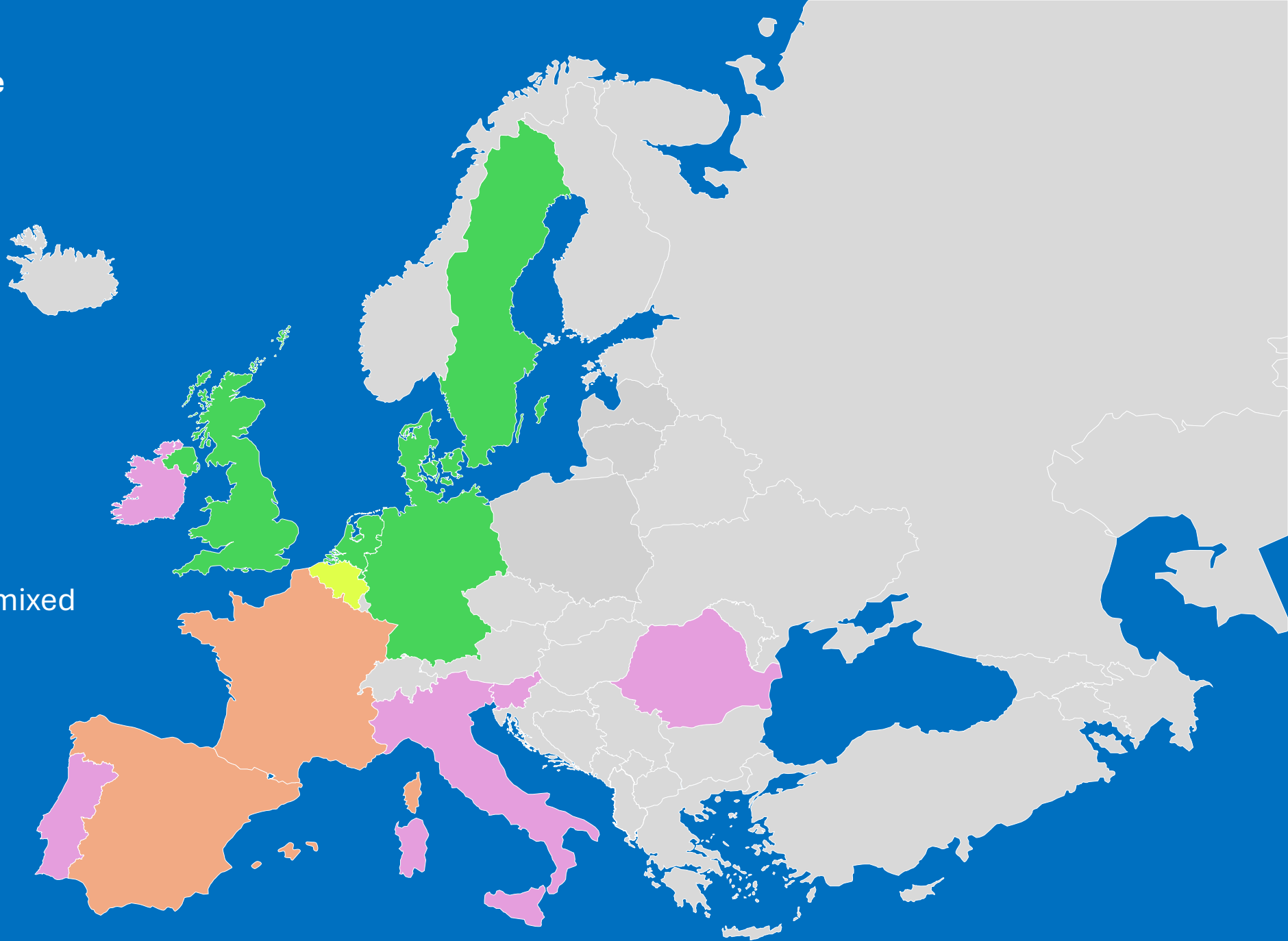
TRS free of charge for users



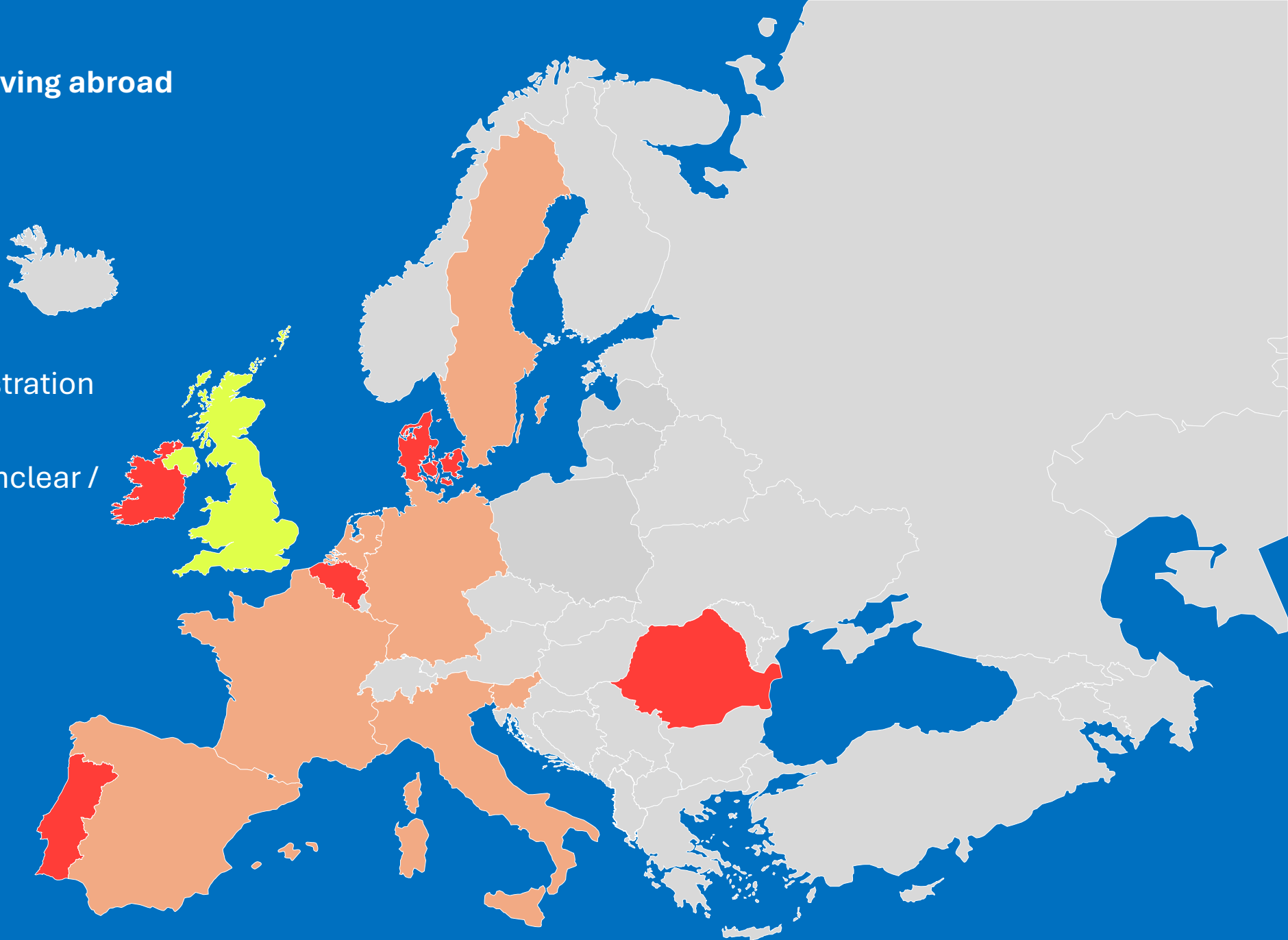
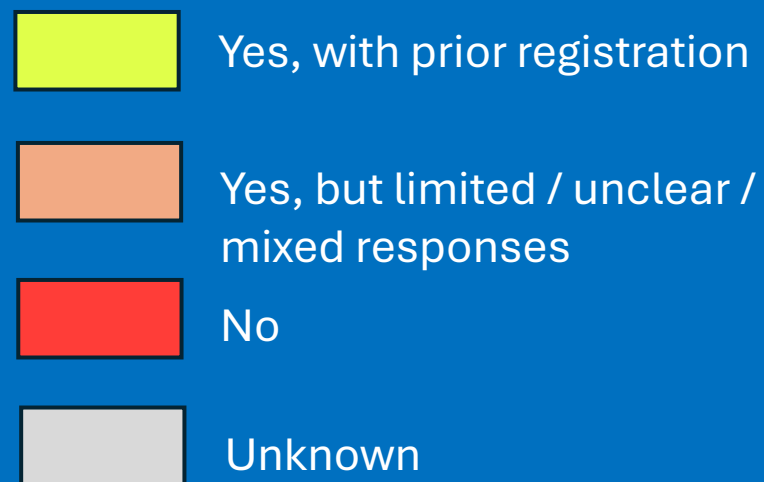
TRS time limitation per user



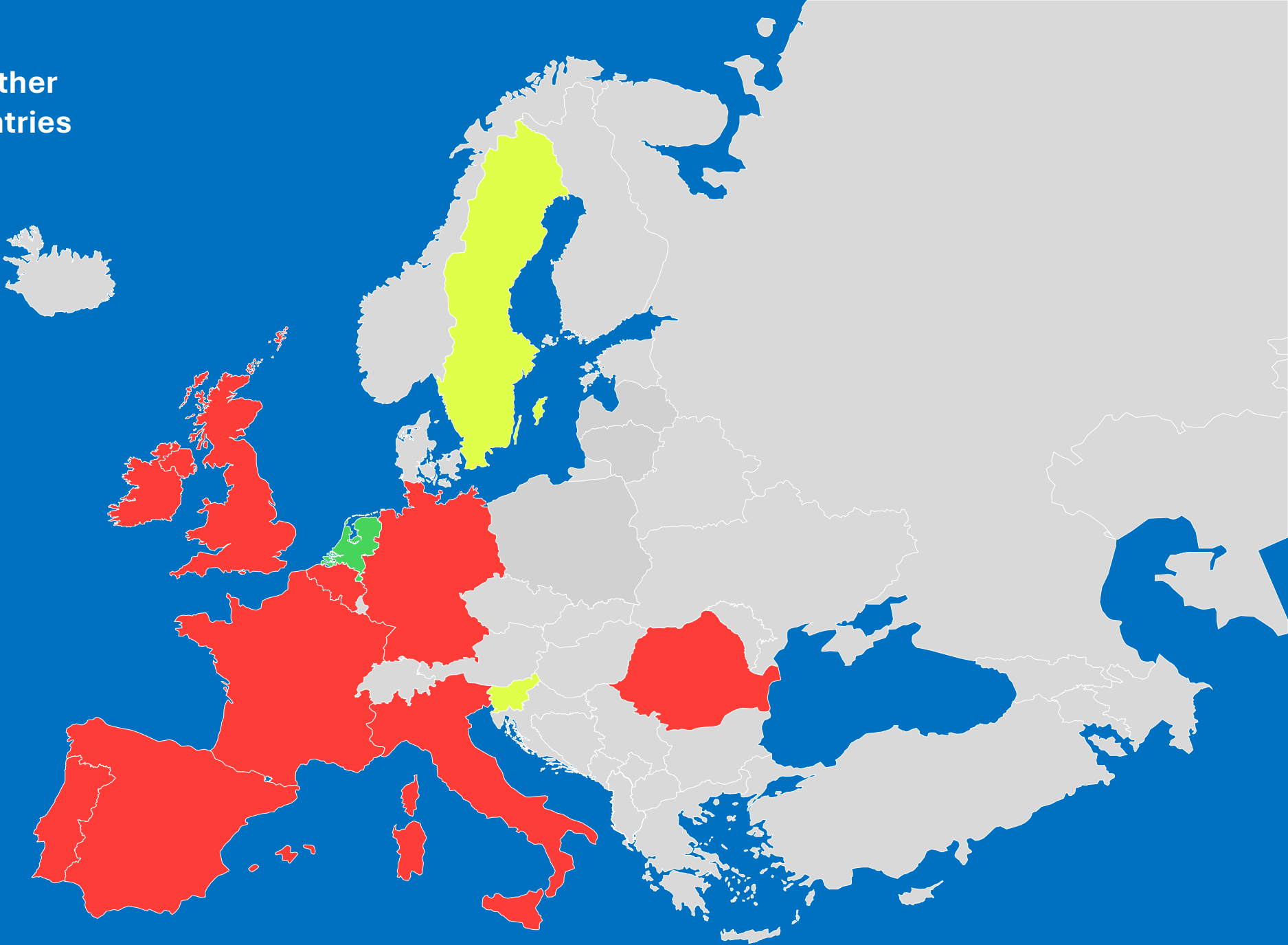
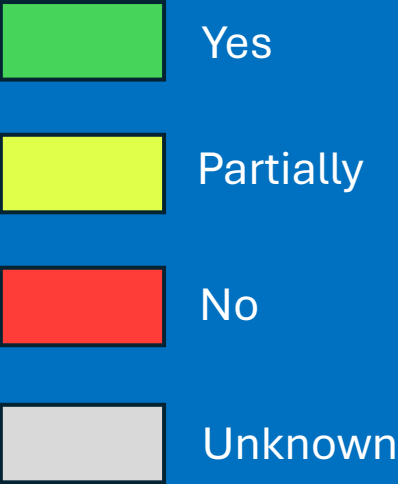
TRS average waiting queue



TRS availability for users living abroad



TRS interoperability with other
systems and/or other countries



Conclusion

- VRS is available in more European countries than TRS
- The majority of VRS and TRS are not available 24/7
- VRS and TRS are predominantly free of charge for users
- Call time limits are more common in VRS than in TRS, with wide variation in threshold
- Waiting queues are a widespread issue both for VRS and TRS
- Interoperability is very limited for both VRS and TRS
- Cross-border access is nearly absent
- Access to 112 through VRS and TRS is limited and inconsistent